

BRIDGERS

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The following is excerpted from “Keep Thy Heart with All Diligence” by David Dombrowski, Lighthouse Trails, December 21, 2011, <http://www.lighthouse Trailsresearch.com/blog/>:

Over the past few years, and especially this past year, Lighthouse Trails has become aware of a new strategy of the enemy. This should be of particular concern if you are a pastor, a Christian leader or author, or a conference speaker--someone who is influencing others. In a recent article, we made reference to some Christian figures, who we termed “bridgers.” These are pastors and Christian leaders who, while they themselves may have reputations as being traditional in their doctrine and teaching, are pointing their followers to Contemplative/New Age mystics and emerging/emergent church leaders. In other words, they are bridges to deception.

A growing and subtle tactic that is actually producing more “bridges” is to invite speakers of differing values, perspectives, and doctrines to the same conference and thereby make the speaker of compromised or apostate teachings appear more credible. For example, a pastor who has been dabbling in mysticism and is looking for a safe way to turn on his congregation to whatever he is practicing will invite a mystic to an upcoming conference; but he will simultaneously invite a conservative Bible teacher known for discernment to the same conference. By doing this, the pastor has now found a way to bring mysticism into his church under the guise of biblical truth. So, in essence, the biblical speaker has become a bridge to false doctrine.

Although this tactic seems rather benign to many, it is actually quite diabolical in that it brings confusion into the body of Christ. Those in the audience who are the more discerning will walk away from such conferences perplexed and disillusioned, while those lacking in discernment may have just taken a ride down the slide to apostasy and delusion. And, another result is that while it lifts the reputation of the false teacher (because he or she is sharing a platform with a biblical teacher), it actually weakens the reputation of the trusted biblical teacher. Oh how clever of Satan to perform such a multi-faceted maneuver. Everyone gets hurt!

We have been trying to warn some to beware of this tactic, which is actually being used in a religious/ political nature to give credence to those with emerging ideas. We have had mixed response to our appeal, but typically what we hear is that these biblical speakers see such conferences as opportunities to have a speaking platform. No matter who they share the platform with. This is what Kay Arthur’s ministry told us when we brought to their attention the problem with Kay Arthur sharing a platform with emerging figure Tony Campolo at the Breakforth event in Canada.

Something similar happened when Calvary Chapel mega-pastor Greg Laurie shared a platform at Lifefest 2011 with a Catholic priest. The priest is known for his work in bringing recognition to a Marian apparition. Harvest Ministries' response to questions about Laurie attending this event with the priest was that this gave him a chance to share his message with the lost.

We could give countless examples where this is happening. A few more are: Rick Warren being invited to share the platform with Chuck Smith at Greg Laurie's Harvest Crusade (Warren also gave the opening prayer), Joel Rosenberg sharing the platform with Leonard Sweet at Breakforth, Norm Geisler speaking at Rick Warren's first "Apologetics Weekend" (the following year, they had 3 well known contemplative speakers, but having Norm Geisler there the year before gave the conference credibility to many), the 2009 National Worship Leaders Conference brought Greg Laurie and Leonard Sweet together, John Piper inviting Rick Warren to his Desiring God event, and on the list could go.

Often, when Christian speakers are trying to justify their actions, they liken these opportunities to Paul speaking to the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill. But, if we are going to use this comparison, we should be ready to do as Paul did. In other words, if invited to such a conference, go ahead and go, but when you get there openly rebuke *in the presence of the audience* the apostate message of the false teacher sharing the same platform; only in this way can the audience gain a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Timothy 5:20).

Unfortunately, we know of few who would or have shown the courage to do this when put in that situation. And this is why we are recommending to those who are trying to maintain biblical integrity to stay away from such speaking opportunities. Too often, it's easy to think that *our* message is so important that we should grab every opportunity to share it. However, in this context, even though these conferences may provide a speaking platform to get *your* message out to those who need to hear it, there is a two-fold downside to this: it minimizes the seriousness of the false teachings, and it neutralizes the message of others trying to share discernment with the church. In other words, a lot is lost, and nothing is gained. Our message then to those who speak at conferences is –please do not compromise just for the sake of *your* message; find out what you are getting into and with whom you will be sharing the speaking platform. And in no way put your message above the message of the Gospel. Remember the words in Scripture:

Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice. I Samuel 15:22

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